purposes of illustration only and not for the purpose of limitation. It is specifically contemplated that minor variations and other embodiments may be employed without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention, the invention being only limited by the claims, as follows:

<u>We Claim</u>:

1. A method of providing faster access to frequently-updated information on a remote server, the method comprising the steps of:

    (a) automatically and periodically causing the downloading of the information to a web farm comprising one or more local servers;

    (b) storing the information on a cache that can be accessed from any of a plurality of browser-equipped workstations coupled to the one or more local servers.

2. A method of providing faster access to frequently-updated information on a remote server, the method comprising the steps of:

    (a) on a prescheduled basis, automatically causing the downloading of the information to a web farm comprising one or more local servers;

    (b) storing the information on a cache that can be accessed from any of a plurality of browser - equipped workstations coupled to the one or more local servers.

3. A method of providing faster access to frequently - updated information on a remote server the method comprising the steps of;

    (a) in response to a user command entered into an input mechanism coupled to a web farm comprising one or more local servers, receiving information at the web farm;

    (b) storing the information on a cache that can be accessed from any of a

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plurality of browser equipped workstations coupled to the one or more local servers.

4. A web farm for providing faster access to frequently-updated information on a remote server, the web farm comprising:

   (a) a first communications port adapted for coupling to a remote server;

   (b) a second communications port adapted for coupling to any of a plurality of browser-equipped workstations;

   (c) a mechanism for automatically and periodically downloading information from the remote server;

   (d) a storage mechanism for storing the downloaded information in a cache accessible from any of the workstations.

5. A web farm for providing faster access to frequently-updated information on a remote server, the web farm comprising:

   (a) a first communications port adapted for coupling to a remote server;

   (b) a second communications port adapted for coupling to any of a plurality of browser-equipped workstations;

   (c) a mechanism for downloading information from the remote server on a prescheduled basis;

   (d) a storage mechanism for storing the downloaded information in a cache accessible from any of the workstations.

6. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of the web farm:

   (a) receiving a request issued by any of the plurality of workstations, the request specifying a first HTTP (HyperText Transport Protocol) document that

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includes HTTP information;

(b) transmitting the request to the remote server;

(c) receiving a first version of the first HTTP document from the remote server;

(d) storing the first version of the first HTTP documents in a data cache;

(e) the web farm responding to the receipt of subsequent requests for the first

HTTP document from any of the plurality of workstations by:

(i) transmitting the request to the remote server;

(ii) receiving a second version of the first HTTP document from the remote server;

(iii) comparing the first version of the first HTTP document stored in the data

cache with second version of the HTTP document and, if the first and second

versions and identical, causing the download of the HTTP document from the

data cache to the workstation.

7. The method of claim 2 further comprising the steps of the web farm:

(a) receiving a request issued by any of the plurality of workstations, the

request specifying a first HTTP (HyperText Transport Protocol) document that

includes HTTP information;

(b) transmitting the request to the remote server;

(c) receiving a first version of the first HTTP document from the remote server;

(d) storing the first version of the first HTTP documents in a data cache;

(e) the web farm responding to the receipt of subsequent requests for the

first HTTP document from any of the plurality of workstations by:

(i) transmitting the request to the remote server;

(ii) receiving a second version of the first HTTP document from the remote

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server;

(iii) comparing the first version of the first HTTP document stored in the data cache with second version of the HTTP document and, if the first and second versions and identical, causing the download of the HTTP document from the data cache to the workstation.

8. The method of claim 6 wherein the data cache is stored at the web farm.

9. The method of claim 7 wherein the data cache is stored at the web farm.

10. The method of claim 6 further including the step of the proxy server updating the data cache by replacing the first version of the HTTP document with the second version of the HTTP document if the first and second versions are not identical.

11. The method of claim 7 further including the step of the proxy server updating the data cache by replacing the first version of the HTTP document with the second version of the HTTP document if the first and second versions are not identical.

12. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of the web farm:

(a) receiving a first request issued by a first workstation, the first request specifying a first HTTP (HyperText Transport Protocol) document that includes HTTP information;

(b) transmitting the first request to the remote server;

(c) receiving a first version of the HTTP document from the remote server;

(d) storing the first version of the first HTTP document in a first dat cache corresponding to the first workstation;

(e) the web farm responding to the receipt of subsequent requests for the first HTTP document from the first workstation by;

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(i) transmitting the request to the remote server;

(ii) receiving a second version of the first HTTP document from the

remote server;

(iii) comparing the first version of the HTTP document stored in the first

data cache with the second version of the HTTPdocument and, if the first and s

second versions are identical, causing the download of HTTP document from

the first data cache to the first workstation;

(f) receiving a second request issued by a second workstation, the second

request specifying a second HTTP (HyperText Transport Protocol)

document that includes HTTP information;

(g) transmitting the second request to the remote server;

(h) receiving a first version of the second HTTP document form the remote server;

(i) storing the first version of the second HTTP document in a second data cache

corresponding to the second workstation;

(j) the web farm responding to the receipt of subsequent requests for the second

HTTP document form the second workstation by:

(i) transmitting the request to the remote server;

(ii) receiving a second version of the second HTTP document from the server;

(iii) comparing the first version of the second HTTP document stored in the second

data cache with the second version of the second HTTP document and, if the first

and second versions are identical, causing the download of the HTTP document

from the second data cache to the second workstation.

13. The method of claim 2 further comprising the steps of the web farm:

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(a) receiving a first request issued by a first workstation, the first request specifying a first HTTP (HyperText Transport Protocol) document that includes HTTP information;

(b) transmitting the first request to the remote server;

(c) receiving a first version of the HTTP document from the remote server;

(d) storing the first version of the first HTTP document in a first data cache corresponding to the first workstation;

(e) the web farm responding to the receipt of subsequent requests for the first HTTP document from the first workstation by;

(i) transmitting the request to the remote server;

(ii) receiving a second version of the first HTTP document from the remote server;

(iii) comparing the first version of the HTTP document stored in the first data cache with the second version of the HTTP document and, if the first and second versions are identical, causing the download of HTTP document from the first data cache to the first workstation;

(f) receiving a second request issued by a second workstation, the second request specifying a second HTTP (HyperText Transport Protocol) document that includes HTTP information;

(g) transmitting the second request to the remote server;

(h) receiving a first version of the second HTTP document from the remote server;

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(i) storing the first version of the second HTTP document in a second

data cache corresponding to the second workstation;

(j) the web farm responding to the receipt of subsequent requests for the second HTTP

document form the second workstation by:

(i) transmitting the request to the remote server;

(ii) receiving a second version of the second HTTP document from the server;

(iii) comparing the first version of the second HTTP document stored in the second data

cache with the second version of the second HTTP document and, if the first and

second versions are identical, causing the download of the HTTP document from

the second data cache to the second workstation.

14. The method of claim 12 wherein the first data cache is stored at any of the

plurality of workstations and the second data cache is stored at any of the

plurality of workstations.

15. The method of claim 13 wherein the first data cache is stored at any of the

plurality of workstations and the second data cache is stored at any of the

plurality of workstations.

16. The method of claim 12 wherein the first and second data caches are stored at

the web farm.

17. The method of claim 13 wherein the first and second data caches are stored at

the web farm.

18. The method of claim 12 further including the step of the web farm updating

the first data cache by replacing the first version of the HTTP document with

the second version of the first HTTP document if the first and second versions

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are not identical.

19. The method of claim 13 further including the step of the web farm updating the first data cache by replacing the first version of the HTTP document with the second version of the first HTTP document if the first and second versions are not identical.

20. The method of claim 12 further including the step of the web farm updating the second data cache by replacing the first version of the second HTTP document with the second version of the second HTTP document if the first and second versions are not identical.

21. The method of claim 13 further including the step of the web farm updating the second data cache by replacing the first version of the second HTTP document with the second version of the second HTTP document if the first and second versions are not identical.

22. The method of claim 12 wherein the web farm receives updated data from any of the first and second workstations, the updated data corresponding to the first HTTP document.

23. The method of claim 13 wherein the web farm receives updated data from any of the first and second workstations, the updated data corresponding to the first HTTP document.

24. The method of claim 22 wherein the proxy server compares the updated data with data stored in any of the first and second data caches for the first HTTP document and, if any data for the first HTTP document are not identical, replacing the nonidentical data in any of the first and second data caches with

the updated data.

25. The method of claim 23 wherein the proxy server compares the updated data with data stored in any of the first and second data caches for the first HTTP document and, if any data for the first HTTP document are not identical, replacing the nonidentical data in any of the first and second data caches with the updated data.

26. The method of claim 24 wherein the web farm uploads the updated data from the remote server.

27. The method of claim 25 wherein the web farm uploads the updated data from the remote server.

28. The web farm of claim 4 further comprising:

    (a) a slower-speed communications port equipped for coupling to any of a plurality of workstations and adapted to receive requests issued by the workstations; at least one of the requests specifying a first HTTP (HyperText Transport Protocol) document that includes HTTP information;

    (b) a faster-speed communications port coupled to a remote server and adapted to transmit the requests to the remote server;

    (c) a document receiving mechanism for receiving a first version of the first HTTP document from the remote server over the faster-speed communications port;

    (d) a storage mechanism that causes the storing of the first version of the first HTTP document in a data cache

    (e) a request receiving mechanism by which the web farm responds to the receipt of subsequent requests for the first HTTP document from any of the

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plurality of workstations by:

(i) transmitting the request to the remote server;

(ii) receiving a second version of the first HTTP document form the

remote server;

(iii) comparing the first version of the first HTTP document stored in the data

cache with the second version of the HTTP document and, if the first and

second versions are identical, causing the download of the HTTP document

and, if the first and second versions are identical, causing the download of

the HTTP document from the data cache to the workstation.

29.   The web farm of claim 5 further comprising:

(a) a slower-speed communications port equipped for coupling to any of a plurality

of workstations and adapted to receive requests issued by the workstations; at

least one of the requests specifying a first HTTP (HyperText Transport

Protocol) document that includes HTTP information;

(b) a faster-speed communications port coupled to a remote server and adapted to

transmit the requests to the remote server;

(c) a document receiving mechanism for receiving a first version of the first   HTTP

document from the remote server over the faster-speed   communications port;

(d) a storage mechanism that causes the storing of the first version of the first

HTTP document in a data cache

(e) a request receiving mechanism by which the web farm responds to the

receipt of subsequent requests for the first HTTP document from any of

the plurality of workstations by:

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(i) transmitting the request to the remote server;

(ii) receiving a second version of the first HTTP document form the
remote server;

(iii) comparing the first version of the first HTTP document stored in
the data cache with the second version of the HTTP document and, if
the first and second versions are identical, causing the download of the
HTTP document and, if the first and second versions are identical,
causing the download of the HTTP document from the data cache to
the workstation.

30. The web farm of claim 28 further including a mechanism for storing the
data cache at any of the plurality workstations.

31. The web farm of claim 29 further including a mechanism for storing the
data cache at any of the plurality workstations.

32. The web farm of claim 28 further including a mechanism for storing the
data cache.

33. The web farm of claim 29 further including a mechanism for storing the
data cache.

34. The web farm of claim 28 further including an updating mechanism by
which the web farm updates the data cache by replacing the first version of the
HTTP document with the second version of the HTTP document if the first and
second versions are not identical.

35. The web farm of claim 29 further including an updating mechanism by
which the web farm updates the data cache by replacing the first version of the

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HTTP document with the second version of the HTTP document if the first and second versions are not identical.

36. The web farm of claim 4 further comprising:

(a) a slower-speed communications port equipped for coupling to any of a plurality of workstations and adapted to receive requests issued by the workstations; at least one of the requests specifying a first HTTP (HyperText Transport Protocol) document that includes HTTP information, and a second HTTP document that includes HTTP information;

(b) a faster-speed communications port coupled to a remote server and adapted to transmit the requests to the remote server;

(c) a document receiving mechanism for receiving a first version of the first HTTP document from the remote server over the faster-speed communications port; and for receiving a first version of the second HTTP document from the remote server over the faster-speed communications port;

(d) a storage mechanism that causes the storing of the first version of the first HTTP document in a first data cache; and the storing of the first version of the second HTTP document in a second data cache;

(e) a request receiving mechanism by which the web farm responds to the receipt of subsequent requests for the first HTTP document from any of the plurality of workstations by:

(i) transmitting the request to the remote sever;

(ii) receiving a second version of the first HTTP document from the remote server;

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(iii) comparing the first version of the first HTTP document stored in the data cache with the second version of the HTTP document and, if the first and second versions are identical, causing the download of the HTTP document from the data cache to the workstation.

37. The web farm of claim 5 further comprising:

(a) a slower-speed communications port equipped for coupling to any of a plurality of workstations and adapted to receive requests issued by the workstations; at least one of the requests specifying a first HTTP (HyperText Transport Protocol) document that includes HTTP information, and a second HTTP document that includes HTTP information;

(b) a faster-speed communications port coupled to a remote server and adapted to transmit the requests to the remote server;

(c) a document receiving mechanism for receiving a first version of the first HTTP document from the remote server over the faster-speed communications port; and for receiving a first version of the second HTTP document from the remote server over the faster-speed communications port;

(d) a storage mechanism that causes the storing of the first version of the first HTTP document in a first data cache; and the storing of the first version of the second HTTP document in a second data cache;

(e) a request receiving mechanism by which the web farm responds to the receipt of subsequent requests for the first HTTP document from any of

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the plurality of workstations by:

(i) transmitting the request to the remote sever;

(ii) receiving a second version of the first HTTP document from the remote server;

(iii) comparing the first version of the first HTTP document stored in the data cache with the second version of the HTTP document and, if the first and second versions are identical, causing the download of the HTTP document from the data cache to the workstation.

38. The web farm of claim 36 wherein the first data cache is stored at any of the plurality of workstations.

39. The web farm of claim 37 wherein the first data cache is stored at any of the plurality of workstations.

40. The web farm of claim 36 wherein the first and second data caches are stored at the proxy server.

41. The web farm of claim 37 wherein the first and second data caches are stored at the proxy server.

42. The web farm of claim 36 further including an updating mechanism for updating the first data cache by replacing the first version of the first HTTP document with the second version of the first HTTP document if the first and second versions are not identical.

43. The web farm of claim 37 further including an updating mechanism for updating the first data cache by replacing the first version of the first HTTP document with the second version of the first HTTP document if the first and

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second versions are not identical.

44. The method of claim 1 wherein the cache is a computer readable storage medium coupled to the plurality of workstations over a local area network.

45. The method of claim 2 wherein the cache is a computer readable storage medium coupled to the plurality of workstations over a local area network.

46. The method of claim 1 wherein the cache is a computer readable storage medium coupled to the web farm.

47. The method of claim 2 wherein the cache is a computer readable storage medium coupled to the web farm (ok as is).

48. The method of claim 1 wherein the cache is a computer readable storage medium coupled to any of the plurality of workstations.

49. The method of claim 2 wherein the cache is a computer readable storage medium coupled to any of the plurality of workstations.

50. The method of claim 1 wherein the cache is a computer readable storage medium distributed amongst a plurality of workstations.

51. The method of claim 2 wherein the cache is a computer readable storage medium distributed amongst a the plurality of workstations.

52. The method of claim 50 wherein the cache is accessible from any of the plurality of workstations.

53. The method of claim 51 wherein the cache is accessible from any of the plurality of workstations.

54. The method of claim 3 wherein the cache is a computer readable storage

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medium coupled to the plurality of workstations over a local area network.

55. The method of claim 3 wherein the cache is a computer readable storage medium coupled to the web farm.

56. The web farm of claim 28 wherein the cache is a computer readable storage medium coupled to any of the plurality of workstations.

57. The web farm of claim 29 wherein the cache is a computer readable storage medium coupled to any of the plurality of workstations.

58. The web farm of claim 28 wherein the cache is a computer readable storage medium distributed amongst a plurality of workstations.

59. The web farm of claim 29 wherein the cache is a computer readable storage medium distributed amongst a plurality of workstations.

60. The web farm of claim 58 wherein the cache is accessible from any of the plurality of workstations.

61. The web farm of claim 59 wherein the cache is accessible from any of the plurality of workstations.

62. The web farm of claim 28 wherein the cache is a computer readable storage medium coupled to the plurality of workstations over a local area network.

63. The web farm of claim 29 wherein the cache is a computer readable storage medium coupled to the plurality of workstations over a local area network.

64. The web farm of claim 28 wherein the cache is a computer readable storage medium coupled to the web farm.

65. The web farm of claim 29 wherein the cache is a computer readable storage medium coupled to the web farm.

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66. The web farm of claim 36 wherein the cache is a computer readable storage medium coupled to any of the plurality of workstations.

67. The web farm of claim 37 wherein the cache is a computer readable storage medium coupled to any of the plurality of workstations.

68. The web farm of claim 36 wherein the cache is a computer readable storage medium distributed amongst a plurality of workstations.

69. The web farm of claim 37 wherein the cache is a computer readable storage medium distributed amongst a plurality of workstations.

70. The web farm of claim 68 wherein the cache is accessible from any of the plurality of workstations.

71. The web farm of claim 69 wherein the cache is accessible from any of the plurality of workstations.

72. The web farm of claim 28 wherein the cache is a computer readable storage medium coupled to the plurality of workstations over a local area network.

73. The web farm of claim 29 wherein the cache is a computer readable storage medium coupled to the plurality of workstations over a local area network.

74. The web farm of claim 28 wherein the cache is a computer readable storage medium coupled to the web farm.

75. The web farm of claim 29 wherein the cache is a computer readable storage medium coupled to the web farm.

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